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ABSTRACT

Families in Schools (FIS) is a pioneering parent education model developed by the Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project (LAAMP), California, and The Parent Institute for Quality Education. A total of 1,275 parents in 2 large urban school districts participated; 93% were Hispanic, and 36% had less than a high school education. More than 70% had children who qualified for free/reduced price meals. Significant behavior changes resulting from the 9-week class were that both elementary and middle/high school parents talked significantly more often with their children's teachers. Elementary school parents visited classrooms more often, read more with their children, and took their children to the public library more frequently. Middle/high school parents helped more often with homework and attended more school activities. Monthly followup telephone surveys indicated that behavior changes lasting 90 days for elementary parents were more contact with teachers, and decreased television watching by and more library visits with their children. For middle/high school parents, attendance at school functions remained high. FIS appears to have the techniques and strategies for success. Greater program refinement and consistency could perhaps produce a more lasting impact. (Contains 3 tables and 12 references.) (SLD)

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Families In Schools: How Did A Parent Education Program Change Parent Behaviors Related to Student Achievement?

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ABSTRACT

Research consistently demonstrates a significant and positive impact of parental involvement on student achievement. Yet many parents, especially those who are non-English-speaking and have limited educations, are traditionally uninvolved. Families In Schools (FIS) is a pioneering parent education model developed by the Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project (LAAMP) and The Parent Institute For Quality Education (PIQE). 1,275 parents in two large urban school districts participated; 93% were Hispanic; 36% had less than a high school education; more than 70% had children who qualified for free/reduced price meals. Significant behavior changes resulting from the nine-week class were that both elementary and middle/high school parents talked significantly more often with their children's teachers; elementary parents visited classrooms more often, read more with their children and took their children to the public library more frequently; middle/high school parents helped more often with homework and attended more school activities. Monthly follow-up telephone surveys indicated that the behavior changes lasting 90 days for elementary parents were more contacts with teachers, decreased children's television watching, and more library visits. For middle/high school parents, attendance at school functions remained high. FIS appears to have the techniques and strategies for success; greater program refinement and consistency could perhaps produce a more lasting impact.

Families In Schools: How Did A Parent Education Program Change Parent Behaviors Related to Student Achievement?

Started in January 1999, Families In Schools (FIS) is a pioneering parent education model developed by the Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project (LAAMP) in cooperation with The Parent Institute For Quality Education (PIQE). Targeting low-income, ethnically diverse urban schools, FIS aims at increasing parental involvement in children's education through a nine-week parent class; monthly follow-up telephone calls by parent coaches, and creation of school-based Action Teams to sustain the emphasis on parental involvement.

Created in 1995, LAAMP is part of the National Annenberg Challenge, a public-private partnership serving 1.3 million students in more than 30 states. LAAMP goals are to improve student performance, upgrade teachers' skills and increase parental and community involvement at 247 Los Angeles County schools. Its reforms are supported by two initiatives: Parents As Learning Partners and Families In Schools (FIS). Founded in 1987, PIQE is a statewide, community-based organization offering a parent education course that has graduated 153,793 parents at 1,262 schools in 77 California districts. Targeting traditionally uninvolved, non-English-proficient parents with limited educations, PIQE has been proven effective at increasing the frequency with which parents read with children, help with homework, praise children, talk to teachers, and attend school meetings.

After a successful preliminary partnership, LAAMP expanded PIQE's nine-week course and developed the FIS program. It created school Action teams, increased the emphasis on literacy and added the follow-up "coaching" component. Last spring 29 schools in three Los Angeles school districts participated in FIS. This report focuses on 1,275 parents at 22 schools, 10 in the Little Lake/Whittier Union School District and 12 in the Pasadena Unified School District. At the schools, 80% of the students are non-White; more than half receive free/reduced price lunches, and a quarter are English Learners. Students test below national averages on standardized tests in reading and language, with the lowest scores among Hispanic students and English Learners.

Theoretical Background

FIS is grounded in overlapping spheres of influence theory (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders & Simon, 1997), which recognizes that students learn and grow in three major contexts: the family, the school and the community. These spheres of influence interact to engage, guide, energize and motivate students. Interaction occurs through communication at both institutional (e.g., the school invites families to Back To School Night) and individual (e.g., a teacher invites a parent for a conference) levels. The assumption is that if children feel cared for and encouraged in multiple reinforcing contexts, they are more likely to do their best to learn and to stay in school. Research leaves no doubt that parental involvement is positively related to student academic success. In a review of 66 studies, reports and books, Henderson and Berla (1996) found that: **a) The family makes critical contributions to student achievement from pre-school through high school.** Regardless of income, education level, or cultural background, all families can contribute to their children's success. Studies show that family interventions—whether home- or school-based, whether begun before or after a child enters school—have long-lasting effects. The reverse is also true. If schools disparage or mistreat parents, student academic success is inhibited; **b) When parents are involved at school as well as at home, children do**

better and stay in school longer. Research invariably finds that the more extensive the parental involvement, the higher the student achievement. The type of involvement does not appear as important as the amount and variety. In programs designed to be full school/parent partnerships, low-income student achievement approaches levels characteristic of middle-class children. Children who are farthest behind make the greatest gains, and **c) When a critical mass of parents is involved, the whole school improves.** When a third of a school's parents are involved, the performance of all children tends to improve.

Finn (1998) identified three types of parental engagement at home consistently associated with higher school performance: actively organizing and monitoring a child's time; helping with homework, and discussing school matters. For younger children, reading is also important. In an intensive study of 10 low-income, African-American students, Clark (1983) found that parents of successful students helped organize their daily and weekly schedules and checked regularly to make sure they followed the routines. These parents knew what their children are doing in school and whether they had homework. They also set aside a place and time for homework. Parents making certain that homework is completed, discussing specific assignments, and checking work have all been related to academic achievement (Ho & Willms, 1996; Clark, 1983; Finn, 1993; Lamborn et al., 1992). When children and parents regularly talk about school overall, children also perform better academically (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Ho & Willms, 1996; Finn, 1993). Studies from the 1960s to the present consistently demonstrate that children living in homes surrounded by books, newspapers, magazines and computers perform better in school (Wolf, 1964; Dave, 1963). Children who read to their parents do better in reading, especially if the parent guides and corrects them (Tracey, 1995). Steinberg (1996) found that academic performance is higher if parents attend school programs, conferences and extracurricular activities.

Project Description

In the fall of 1998, LAAMP contacted several groups of schools to inquire about their interest in FIS. The first two to agree were the Little Lake/Whittier Union and Pasadena Unified School Districts. Both included elementary, middle and high schools. Several weeks before the first meeting, FIS recruiters began calling parents. All recruiters had graduated from PIQE's nine-week course and been recommended by instructors. After two hours of training, each recruiter received a written script and called up to 150 parents per school. Notices in school bulletins and newsletters also solicited participation. At their initial meeting, parents were divided into 50 groups of approximately 25 each. Parents were assigned to either day or evening classes and to instructors based on availability, language and individual preferences. With a bachelor's degree or its equivalent from their country of origin, each instructor received three hours of initial training, plus 1½ hours of weekly staff development. Using principles pioneered by Pablo Frerie, instructors emphasized small groups, experiential exercise, role-playing and at-home activities. Although the classes followed a written curriculum, teaching was non-didactic, with instructors and parents sharing responsibility for the content and tone of each class. Classes met in 90-minute sessions once a week. In FIS, parents learned the importance of regularly visiting their child's classroom, asking teachers about their child's performance, improving communication with children, helping children learn at home, helping children avoid drugs and gangs, planning for college, and how the school system functions. Parents also learned reading techniques to assist their children.

Program objectives were to:

1. Significantly increase the frequency of parent/teacher communication,
2. Significantly increase the frequency of parental behaviors that support student learning,
3. Raise parental expectations for their children's future,
4. Increase parental involvement at school,
5. Motivate parents to pursue their own educational goals.

After instruction ended, one parent from each class was trained as a "coach" to call FIS classmates monthly until the end of the school year. Almost all of the coaches were mothers; 90% were Hispanic. During the calls, elementary school coaches asked parents how many times in the past month they practiced desired behaviors, such as reviewing their child's homework. Questions for middle and high school parents differed slightly (e.g, "how many times did you see your child reading?" replaced "how many times did you read to your child?"). Coaches met monthly to turn in reports and receive additional training. In addition to collecting information, the calls served as behavioral reminders for parents.

METHOD

Participants

1,275 parents participated: 74% were at elementary schools; 15% at middle schools and 11% at high schools. Sixty-six percent of the parents attended FIS in the Pasadena district, while 34% were in the Little Lake/Whittier Union district. More than three-quarters (77%) of the parents were mothers. Ninety-three percent were Hispanic; 3% were White; 2% were African American and 1% was Asian. Three-quarters spoke Spanish at home. The largest percentage, 36%, had less than a high school education, while 30% had a GED and 14% had completed high school. More than 70% had incomes low enough for their children to qualify for free/reduced price meals. Eighty-eight percent of the parents completed surveys in Spanish and 12% in English.

Surveys

For the survey, educators, parents and LAAMP and PIQE staff chose to create a short, simple, behavior-based instrument. Written in English and translated into Spanish, the instrument was piloted and revised with a group of parents before its large-scale implementation. Questions were:

Objective 1: Significantly increase the frequency of parent/teacher communication
Elementary Question How many times during the last month did you talk to your child's teacher about your child's academic progress? How many times during the last month did you visit your child's classroom? *Middle/High School Question* In the past month, how many times did you talk to your child's teacher or counselor about your child's academic progress?
Objective 2: Significantly increase the frequency of parental behaviors that support student learning
Elementary Question In the past week, how many times did you read to your child or listen to your child read? In the past week, how many times did you review your child's homework? *Middle/High School Questions* In the past week, how many times did you see your child reading? In the past week, how many times did you talk about or help your child with homework? In the past week, how many times did you have a friendly conversation with your child? *Elementary & Middle/High School Questions* In the past week, how many times did you praise your child for doing well? In the past week, how many hours a day did your child watch TV? How many times in the past month did your child visit the public library?
Objective 3: Raise parental expectations for their children's future
Elementary & Middle/High School Question How far in school do you expect your children to go?
Objective 4: Increase parental involvement at school
Elementary & Middle/High School Question How many times in the past month have you been at the school for an activity or meeting other than to talk to your child's teacher?
Objective 5: Motivate parents to pursue their own educational goals
Elementary & Middle/High School Questions How likely is it that you will take a GED, ESL or other adult education class in the next 6 months? How likely is it that you will take a college class in the next 6 months? How likely is it that you will take additional training for work in the next 6 months?

Surveys were administered in the following sequence:

Baseline	First FIS class
2	Last FIS class
3	30 days after the last FIS class
4	60 days after the last FIS class
5	90 days after the last FIS class

Each coach made at least three attempts to call a parent. Response rates were:

Parents	Baseline	Survey 2	Survey 3	Survey 4	Survey 5
Elementary school	75%	42%	43%	41%	38%
Middle/high school	73%	39%	43%	33%	36%

To assess the immediate impact of FIS, T-tests compared baseline and survey 2 means for parents who provided both surveys. Our sample size per question dropped to an average of 287 elementary and 76 middle/high school parents. To determine how long changes lasted, we created a subset of parents who had completed the baseline and all four follow-up surveys. For elementary parents, depending on the question, the number in the subset varied from 67 to 226, averaging 163 parents. In the middle/school data set, the sample was reduced to between 19 and 60, averaging 36 parents. We then used GLM Repeated Measures Analysis to look at effect attrition. Finally, we conducted GLM Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance using the following factors: school district, school type, school, class, instructor, coach, children's home language, parents' home language, free/reduced lunch status, length of U.S. residency, gender, child in special education, parent education and parent attendance. For all statistical tests, significance was defined at $p<.05$ or above.

RESULTS

What effect did the nine-week FIS course have on the frequency of parent/teacher communication? Surveys given immediately before and after the course showed the following significant changes in parent behavior (see Tables 1 and 2):

Elementary and middle/high school parents talked more frequently to the teacher or counselor about their child's academic progress. For elementary parents, the number of contacts increased from 1.6 to 2.0 times a month (a 25% increase). For middle/high school parents, contacts rose from 0.8 to 1.38 a month (75% increase). Elementary parents visited their children's classrooms more often, increasing their number of monthly visits from 1.7 to 2.1 (24% increase).

On parental behavior related to children's education: Elementary parents read more to their children, with the average number of times a week increasing from 3.8 to 4.4 (a 16% increase). In middle/high schools, the number of times a parent saw a child reading dropped, although the difference was not significant.

Middle/high school parents talked with or helped their child more often with homework, with the average number of times a week increasing from 2.85 to 3.44 (17% increase). Although elementary parents reviewed their children's homework more often after the course, the increase was not significant.

Elementary children visited the public library more often, with the number of monthly visits rising from 1.5 to 2.1 (40% increase). Middle/high school parents reported no change.

While the number of times a week parents praised their children for doing well increased for both elementary and middle/high school parents, the change was not significant for either group. In both, the number of hours children watched television decreased, but not significantly. There was no significant change in the number of times a week that middle/high school parents had friendly conversations with their children.

On raising parental expectations for their children's future. Parents entered FIS with already high expectations—80% of elementary and 74% of middle/high school parents expected their children to attend college. After the course, percentages in both groups rose, but only marginally.

On increasing parental involvement at school. Middle/high school parents attended school activities and meetings more often by the end of FIS, with average individual attendance rising from 0.6 to 1.45 activities a month (150% increase). The slight increase for elementary parents was not significant.

On motivating parents to pursue their own educational goals. By the last class, parents thought it less likely they would take adult education, a college class or work training in the next six months.

Table 1
Self-Reported Elementary Parent Behaviors Before and Immediately After FIS

Question	Baseline Mean	Post FIS Mean	P
In the past week, how many times did you read to your child or listen to your child read? (N=345)	3.83	4.39	p<.000
In the past week, how many times did you review your child's homework? (N=333)	4.28	4.37	ns
In the past week, how many times did you praise your child for doing well? (N=331)	3.74	3.93	ns
In the past week, how many hours a day did your child watch TV? (N=333)	3.32	3.09	ns
How many times during the last month did you talk to your child's teacher about your child's academic progress? (N=333)	1.57	1.97	p<.000
How many times during the last month did you visit your child's classroom? (N=333)	1.75	2.08	p<.001
How many times in the past month did your child visit the public library? (N=325)	1.50	2.14	p<.000
How many times in the past month have you been at the school for an activity or meeting other than to talk to your child's teacher? (N=325)	1.27	1.44	ns
How far in school do you expect your children to go? (N=325)	4.54	4.58	ns
How likely is it that you will take a GED, ESL or other adult education class in the next 6 months?	3.31	3.23	ns

Question	Baseline Mean	Post FIS Mean	P
(N=231)			
How likely is it that you will take a college class in the next 6 months? (N=109)	2.13	2.06	ns
How likely is it that you will take additional training for work in the next six months? (N=118)	3.11	2.69	p<.005

Table 2
Self-Reported Middle/High School Parent Behaviors Before and Immediately After FIS

Question	Baseline Mean	Post FIS Mean	P
In the past week, how many times did you see your child reading? (N=89)	4.10	3.73	ns
In the past week, how many times did you talk about or help your child with homework? (N=89)	2.85	3.44	p<.05
In the past week, how many times did you praise your child for doing well? (N=87)	3.09	3.17	ns
In the past week, how many times did you have a friendly conversation with your child? (N=89)	4.83	4.91	ns
In the past week, how many hours a day did your child watch television? (N=91)	2.87	2.77	ns
In the past month, how many times did your child visit the public library? (N=88)	1.81	1.81	ns
In the past month, how many times did you talk with your child's teacher or counselor about your child's academic progress? (N=82)	0.8	1.38	p<.006
How many times in the past month have you been at the school for an activity or meeting other than to talk to your child's teacher? (N=82)	0.6	1.45	p<.000
How far in school do you expect your children to go? (N=84)	4.31	4.33	ns
How likely is it that you will take a GED, ESL or other adult education class in the next 6 months? (N=50)	2.86	2.82	ns
How likely is it that you will take a college class in the next 6 months? (N=36)	2.50	1.78	p<.009
How likely is it that you will take additional training for work in the next six months? (N=45)	3.51	2.58	p<.001

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How well did the changes persist over time?.

Frequency of parent/teacher communication. For elementary parents, the number of times they talked to the teacher about their child's academic progress jumped dramatically from the baseline of 1.53 times a month to 1.74 times a month at the end of FIS. The change not only persisted; it increased for the next 60 days. After 90 days, parents were talking to teachers an average of 1.89 times a month, which was still significantly above baseline.

The frequency with which middle/high school parents talked to a teacher or counselor about their child's academic progress increased from a baseline of 0.6 times a month to 1.64 times at the end of FIS. It then dropped to 0.9, where it remained for the next 90 days.

A huge increase occurred in the number of visits by elementary parents to classrooms, with the baseline mean of 1.7 rising to 1.93 by the end of FIS. However, time was not a statistically significant factor. This may be because parents continued a high number of visits. In fact, after 90 days, parents were visiting classrooms even more often than before (1.98 times a month).

Parental behaviors related to children's education. The frequency with which elementary parents read to children rose from 3.9 days a week in the baseline to 4.6 days a week by the end of FIS. A decline then started, with the average dropping to 3.94 days a week after 60 days. After 90 days, the frequency had dipped to 3.68 days a week. The number of times middle/high school parents saw their children read climbed from a baseline mean of 4.19 days a week to 4.32 by the end of FIS. It then dropped to 3.54 after 30 days, 3.57 after 60 days and 3.03 after 90 days.

The frequency with which elementary parents reviewed children's homework dropped insignificantly from the baseline average of 4.4 to 4.39 times a week right after FIS. After 60 days, it had fallen to 4.2 and after 90 days, to 3.7. At baseline, middle/high school parents reviewed or helped with homework an average of 2.32 times a week. By the end of FIS, parents reported reviewing homework 3.39 times a week. Ninety days later, the figure was still above baseline at 2.34 times a week.

The number of times elementary parents praised their children rose from a 3.54 baseline to 3.93 times a week by the end of the FIS course. It dropped during the next two months (3.68 and 3.56) but still remained above the baseline. After 90 days, it was down to 3.38 times a week. The number of times middle/high school parents praised their children displayed no consistent pattern. Mean baseline and 90-day figures were exactly the same—3.03 times a week.

Right after the FIS course, the number of friendly conversations middle/high school parents had with children rose from a mean of 4.61 a week to 4.92 a week. The next month, it increased to 4.97 a week. After 60 days, it dropped below baseline to 4.5. After 90 days, it was 4.53.

The number of hours a day that elementary parents reported their child watched TV steadily and significantly decreased, declining from a baseline high of 3.41 to a low of 2.51 within 90 days after the FIS course ended. For middle/high school parents, the number rose and fell, ending slightly below the 2.86 baseline after 90 days.

The number of times that elementary children visited the public library rose significantly from the baseline of 1.53 times a month and stayed high. After 90 days, it was 1.90 times a month. For middle/high school children, the number of library visits increased from a baseline of 1.62 to 1.73 times a month right after the FIS course. It gradually fell to 1.54 after 90 days.

Parental expectations for their children's future. Although the changes were not statistically significant, elementary parent expectations for children steadily rose from the

baseline. At baseline, 25% of the parents expected their children to graduate from a four-year college and 52% expected their children to attend graduate school. 30 days after FIS ended, 24% of parents thought their children would graduate from college and 61% thought their children would attend graduate school.

For middle/high school parents, the changes in expectations were statistically significant. At baseline, 21% of parents expected their children to graduate from a 4-year college and 46% expected their children to attend graduate school. After 90 days, 32% of parents expected their children to graduate from college and 64% thought their children would attend graduate school.

Parental involvement at school. While the number of times elementary parents visited school for activities or meetings increased from 1.18 to 1.43 times a month right after FIS; it dipped sharply to 0.9 times a month within 30 days. After 90 days, it had climbed back up to the 1.18 baseline. Middle/high school parent attendance followed a similar pattern, jumping from a 0.6 baseline to 1.64 times a month by the end of FIS. It then dropped to 0.7 times a month and after 90 days, inched up to 0.8 times a month.

Parents' own educational aspirations. The likelihood that an elementary parent would take an adult education class, college class or additional work training continually decreased from baseline. After FIS, more middle/high school parents thought they would take an adult education class within the next six months, although the increase was not statistically significant. Fewer thought they would take a college class or additional work training. These declines were statistically significant.

Table 3 indicates that the only significant, positive behavior changes that persisted over 90 days for elementary school parents were an increase in the number of times each month that they talked to teachers; a decrease in the number of hours a day that their children watched TV, and an increase in the number of monthly library visits. For middle/high school parents, the only lasting positive behavior changes were that the number of times they went to school for an activity or meeting increased and expectations for their children continued to rise significantly.

Table 3.

Statistically Significant Changes Over Time for Parents Completing All Five Surveys

Elementary Parents				
Question	**Baseline Mean**	**Post FIS Mean**	**90 day Mean**	**P**
In the past week, how many times did you read to your child? (N=192)	3.91	4.60	3.68	p<.000
In the past week, how many times did you review your child's homework (N=179)	4.40	4.39	3.70	p<.000
In the past week, how many times did you praise your child for doing well? (N=180)	3.54	3.93	3.38	p<.008
In the past week, how many hours a day did your child watch TV? (N=181)	3.41	2.99	2.51	p<.000
How many times during the last month did you talk to your child's teacher about your child's academic progress? (N=183)	1.53	1.74	1.89	p<.03
How many times in the past month did your child visit the public library? (N=175)	1.53	2.11	1.90	p<.000
How many times in the past month have you been at the school for a meeting or activity other than to talk to your child's teacher? (N=176)	1.18	1.43	1.18	p<.000
Middle and High School Parents				
Question	**Baseline Mean**	**Post FIS Mean**	**90 day Mean**	**P**
In the past week, how many times did you see your child reading? (N=37)	4.19	4.32	3.03	p<003
How many times during the last month have you been at the school for an activity or meeting other than to talk to your child's teacher? (N=36)	0.6	1.64	0.8	p<.001
How far in school do you expect your children to go? (N=60)	4.35	4.42	4.72	p<.002
How likely is it that you will take a college class in the next six months? (N=19)	2.53	1.68	1.16	p<.001
How likely is it that you will take additional training for work in the next six months? (N=25)	3.32	2.40	2.20	p<.02

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GLM Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance indicated that the factors most influential on outcomes were not parent demographics, but rather structural features of the program--class, instructor, school and coach.

DISCUSSION

A major FIS goal was to increase the number of parent/teacher contacts. Within the first three weeks of class, parents were required to arrange for a teacher conference and taught how to question the teacher about their child's progress. For example, FIS instructors explained that while a child's grade or test score is important, parents should also ask how their child performs relative to other students in the class. Results indicate that the frequency of parent/teacher contacts dramatically increased during the FIS course, especially for middle/high school parents. Elementary parents also began visiting classrooms much more often. However, the only change that persisted 90 days later was the frequency of conversations between elementary parents and teachers.

Another FIS goal was to help parents support their children's learning at home. Behaviors such as reading with the child and creating a quiet place to study are emphasized. After FIS, elementary parents spent significantly more time reading with their children and children visited the public library more often. Middle/high school parents spent more time talking to their children about homework. Ninety days after FIS, only the increase in the number of library visits for elementary children persisted.

While FIS aims at raising parental expectations, the majority of parents arrived at the class already thinking their children would attend college. Surprisingly, middle/high school parents had a sharp and significant increase in expectations 90 days after FIS ended. This may have been because of non-FIS activities, such as school College Days.

School involvement by middle/high school parents significantly increased after FIS and the increase lasted for at least 90 days.

Instead of an increased desire to pursue their own education, parents ended FIS with less desire for self-improvement. The only hint of explanation is that FIS attendance averaged 65%, which may indicate that many parents found the time commitment too burdensome.

In general, it appears that FIS succeeded at reducing some barriers to parental involvement. Parent support of learning both at school and at home increased. The fact that elementary parents visited classrooms more often and that middle/high school parents gave more attention to homework reflects common and expected patterns of parental involvement.

Because parent demographics were so similar across schools, the strong influence of class and instructor on outcomes suggests high variability in program implementation. This could result from the intentionally loose program format, in which class members shared equal responsibility with instructors; a lack of consistency in the weekly instructor training, or variation in instructor qualifications and effectiveness. Unfortunately, our study did not collect detailed instructor data.

Analysis of variance produced some surprises. In elementary schools, parents were much more likely to read to children who spoke English at home. Parent language itself did not make a significant difference. We also found that:

1. FIS led to a significantly larger increase in middle/high school fathers praising their children than middle/high school mothers.

2. The largest decline in elementary children's television viewing occurred among parents with the least education.

3. Visits to schools by elementary parents increased most for parents with GEDs.

In carrying out the study, we ran into a number of problems:

1. On many surveys, 40% or more of the parents left questions unanswered, which greatly limited data reliability.

2. We had comparatively few complete data sets. With elementary parents, we started with 993 parents; only 180 (18%) provided complete data. With middle and high school parents, we had complete data from 36 of 282 parents (13%).

3. The wording of some questions caused confusion. For example, high percentages of parents checked that they expected their child to attend graduate school. In retrospect, parents probably interpreted the question as meaning they expected their child to graduate from school.

4. The timing of some surveys may have produced artificially low responses. Many questions asked how often a parent performed a behavior the previous week. If spring break occurred that week, the response would have been artificially low. Because of differences in school schedules, it's also quite possible that some coaches gave parents the final survey during summer vacation.

5. Initially we hoped to examine how FIS participation contributed to student achievement. Given time and financial constraints, this became impossible and was a serious shortcoming.

Future studies should attempt better coordination of survey administration and school schedules; monitor instructor training and observe classrooms for consistent quality and content; work harder at capturing complete data; clarify question wording, and collect data on academic performance.

In general, results indicate that FIS significantly increased parental involvement related to student achievement at participating schools, although the longevity of the changes is problematic. FIS appears to have the techniques and strategies for success; greater program refinement and consistency could perhaps produce a more lasting impact.

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